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## SERMON DCCVI.

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### THE WORK OF THE MINISTRY.

"And he gave some apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ."—EPHESIANS IV. 11, 12.

THESE words reveal the origin, and declare the object, of the Christian Ministry. Apostles and prophets and evangelists and teachers, and if there be any other order of actual and accepted ministers, are all and all alike, Christ's bequest to the world. He gave them. Coming from him they come on his errand, and are here to do his work. What is that work? It is a question for ministers. It is a question for the churches. Nay, it is a question for all who enjoy the services of the ministry,—What is the precise and definite work, assigned by our Sovereign Lord, to his heralds and ministers? My text you perceive answers his question. It tells us that the ascended Saviour has sent to his church, the ministry in its several orders, or divisions, that they may perfect his saints. That then is the prescribed work of the Christian Ministry.

And here I have my theme for this occasion. I propose to discourse to you, my brethren, upon the prescribed proper work of the Christian Ministry. I shall set forth that work, as it is authoritatively defined, and exactly described in my text, representing it, as a work to be performed within the church and upon the saints, a work namely of perfecting the people of God.

It must be acknowledged, however, here at the outset of our inquiries, that at first view, the definition given in the text seems to be incomplete and partial. The apostle has apparently omit-

ted, at least, two essential departments of the minister's appointed work. It is undoubtedly of great importance that God's people detained in his earthly churches, should be instructed and edified. But is it not equally desirable, that general intelligence should be promoted, and social order secured, and public virtue enforced? And is it not plainly part of the appointed work of the ministry to suggest and set forward all needed reforms, to instruct rulers, to assist in laying down the platforms of parties, to be present in caucus meetings and congresses, to name presidents, and superintend generally the business and the morals of the world? Do not all these public interests need supervision? Are they not all in the empire and under the authority of Christ the Lord, and so responsible to his appointed ministers?

And yet in this seemingly careful statement of the inspired apostle, touching the proper business of the ministry in this world, no mention is made of any of these duties. Is there a serious omission then in our text?

But again: the apostle has said nothing in this text, of the work of the ministry among the unregenerate outside the church. It is certainly of the utmost consequence to the well-being of society and the progress of religion, that sinners should be instructed and brought to repentance. It has always been considered an important part of a minister's duty to seek in all possible ways, and by the most earnest and persevering endeavors, the conversion of his impenitent hearers. And yet in this inspired account of the work assigned to the ministry, nothing is said of labor among the ungodly.

What shall we say to these things? Is the text defective? Has the apostle set down only a part of the minister's work? Or have we been mistaken, falsely imagining that the ministers of religion had in charge the public morals and the souls of the unregenerate?

The answer to these questions is not difficult or doubtful. It can not be claimed for a moment by any candid reader of the New Testament that questions of public virtue and general well being have been by authority of Christ, ruled out of the mind and the care of his ministers. They owe it to their Master, and owe it to their office, to labor diligently and zealously, to advance intelligence, and develop virtue, and promote just legislation among all orders of the people. Nor can it be questioned, that it is also part of the minister's appointed and indispensable work, to seek the conversion and salvation of the impenitent. The question is not at all a question of doing or neglecting. It is only a question of doing in one way, or in another and less successful way. For example: admit that the minister of Christ is appointed to supervise and improve the public morals. It will still be matter of careful consideration,—By what kind of en-

deavors, and what kind of work, he can best accomplish what he desires? If it be conceded, as it doubtless will be, that no instrumentality is so efficient and so sure, for this object, as is a good example, and if it be confessed furthermore, that the saints of God exhibit in their daily walk a good example, just in proportion as they are edified in grace and perfected in godliness; then the way, the precise and particular way, for a minister to promote public virtue is by obeying the text, and edifying and perfecting the saints. The history of all the centuries informs us that one good man is worth more to the community and to the world, than volumes of sermons. If this be so, and nobody doubts it, it decides the question concerning the course to be taken by Christ's ministers. Let them do their utmost to furnish and send forth into all the walks and relationships of society, saints, that are not only converted but also exemplary and eminent. The next, therefore, includes, though it does not name this important work.

But again: it is unquestionably the duty of every minister of Christ to seek the conversion of the impenitent. The only question to be asked on this point is, as before,—In what way? Every one answers,—In the most certain and the most successful way. The conversion of sinners is a matter of such infinite moment to all persons and parties, that no congregation and no community and no man can afford to have it attempted, and especially by the minister of Christ, in any but the best way. What is that best way? There are certain facts, derived from long experience, which will assist us in answering this question. Let us attend to them, and that with a becoming patience and care and candor.

First then: It is a fact proved by the experiment of ages, that the ministry which fails to edify and perfect the people of God, fails also, and in every instance, in its attempts to convert sinners. Look the world over, and it was never known that a minister of Christ was successful among the ungodly, who was either negligent or impotent in his work among the saints. It would seem from this single fact that the power of the ministry over impenitent men, is in some way dependent on its success among the people of God. But let us advance a step; and say secondly,—

It is another fact equally well attested, that whenever the ministry has been successful in its prescribed and specific work of perfecting the saints, it has succeeded also in gathering and converting sinners.

History has another law which we must not fail to study in this connection. In the progress of the ages, great numbers of persons, of all ranks, races and conditions have been converted and brought into the church. Now it is a most interesting and instructive inquiry,—By what agency, that is, by what personal agency, and human endeavor, have these impenitent souls been con-

verted? We all believe that whoever is truly converted is born of the Holy Spirit, and of divine truth. And we are inquiring now, not for the efficient author, or the inspired instrument of regeneration, but for the human agency through which this work has been effected in former times. If those who have been brought into the kingdom of Christ thus far, have been awakened and led to the Saviour mainly by ministers and sermons, that fact ought to be discovered and published. For it reveals to the people of God, that the converting instrumentality of the church is hid in the pulpit. If, on the contrary, it be a fact that a large majority of all the converts of all past ages, have been brought to Christ by the labors and prayers and pious examples of other orders of christians, that fact ought to be ascertained and published. For it declares that God's people, and not his ministers, are the appointed and chief instrumentality for the conversion of the wicked. Now what is the truth on this question? Take the members of any one of your churches, the present or the previous members, and inquire into the origin of their religious history, and I venture the assertion, that seven-tenths of them were brought to inquiry and repentance neither by ministers, nor by sermons, but by the personal influence and faithful endeavors of private christians. Doubtless ministers and sermons contributed something to the final result. But the direct and decisive instrumentality, was that of private christians. And if we pass to other sections of christendom, and go back to former ages, the same law has prevailed in all countries and under all dispensations, since there was a church in the world. More than seven-tenths of all the converts who have ever entered the fold of the Redeemer, have been led to the Saviour, not by sermons, but by private endeavors made by individual christians. In this great and glorious work of gathering for Christ, parents have ever had the chief honor and the greatest success.

My brethren, here is an array of well attested and impressive facts. We cannot deny them. We cannot ignore them. They stand before us bearing a lesson and a meaning. What are we to infer from these decisive experiments, and these unquestioned results? Nobody it seems to me, can hesitate as to the inference. These facts inform us, that the church, not the ministry, the church is God's great converting instrumentality in this world.

But we have not done yet with the experiments and the lessons of the past. More than seven-tenths of all the converts who have come into the church, thus far, have been led to Christ by the endeavors and the prayers of private christians. That is one fact. Another is, that whenever this work of converting the ungodly, has been transferred to the ministry, whether by the negligence of the people, or the usurpation of the preacher, it has uniformly declined and failed. It is God's purpose and command that his people shall bring sinners to his Son. And therefore so

soon as private christians lay off their responsibilities, and suspend the work of calling impenitent ones to Christ, impenitent men cease coming to Christ. But all experience declares, once more, what it needs no experience to understand and believe, that private christians are qualified and disposed to engage in this good work, just in the proportion in which they are perfected and sanctified. Parents, Sabbath School teachers, and others in other relations, uniformly undertake this work, and succeed in it, according to the measure of their piety and spirituality and faith.

With these facts in view, what shall a minister of Christ do, who desires the conversion of impenitent men, and wishes to do just what shall be most wise and most effectual for that end? Of course he will preach the Word, declaring to men the whole counsel of God. Whatever truth or duty is sent to sinners in the inspired message, he will deliver, and deliver to the right persons. That is to say, he will divide the Word, and give to every hearer his portion. But while he preaches to saints and sinners alike, on what will he rely for his chief success among the impenitent. Why plainly, not on sermons and exhortations addressed to the ungodly, but on the example and the influence of the people of God. And to make that example most impressive and that influence most potent, he will give himself earnestly and daily to the work set down in my text, edifying the body of Christ and perfecting his saints.

The apostle does not abridge the functions, and contract the field of the ministry, then, by the terms of our text. For whatever it is proper for a christian pastor to do, or to attempt to do, in his official calling, whether it be to reconstruct governments, or reform rulers, or improve the public morals, or convert impenitent men, he can do successfully and safely only through the instrumentality of a sanctified and symmetric church. When therefore the inspired apostle bids the ministry to seek first of all and chiefly, the perfection of Christ's servants and saints, he comprehends in that one work, and that by its certain and predestined issues, all the offices and all the ends of the ministry.

Our way is now open to the subject in hand. The great and leading work assigned to the Christian Ministry in this world, is the work of edifying and perfecting the saints.

This is the doctrine of our text. This is the theme of our sermon.

Perfecting the saints obviously means, improving and perfecting their christian character. And a christian's character may be improved or perfected in two ways; first as respects its symmetry, and secondly as respects its measure. By the first process, absent graces are supplied and dwarfed affections developed, and the character that was before deformed, is rounded and finished. By the second process all the graces are developed together to greater strength and ripeness. This is the work to be

performed by Christ's ministering servants, edifying and perfecting his saints.

Contemplating our subject more directly now, let us consider—

**I. WHAT OBVIOUS OCCASION THERE IS FOR JUST THIS WORK, IN EVERY ONE OF THE CHURCHES OF CHRIST.**

Take for example, this church to which we are to-day to give a pastor, a church of a hundred and twenty, or a hundred and fifty members, gathered out of all ranks, conditions, ages and callings, in this community. Set before your mind in the first instance, some one of these communicants, and carefully note his present condition as a christian. There are in his heart all the rudiments and first principles of genuine piety; all gracious affections, all good instincts. These were secretly implanted by the Holy Spirit, at his conversion. There are also as the fruit of the first uses of these new affections, the beginnings perhaps of a complete set of christian habits. So much has been accomplished. Religion has unfolded so far in that regenerate mind. But look again, and that with a view to discover how much remains to be done in that mind and heart, before the religion of Christ has captured and cleansed and sanctified the entire man. In the first place, all the old corrupt affections, that like secreted diseases, or the roots of weeds, remain in that regenerate heart, are to be detected and dislodged. Secondly, all the old worldly habits of thinking, of feeling, of acting, that have been for years woven into the very fabric of his daily life, are to be separated and thrown aside. And then thirdly, the new affections and first principles of grace, now so weak, so timid, and so intermittent, are to be developed, and confirmed, and made strong within, and courageous and conspicuous in their outward acts. All the germs of christian habits too, are to be watched and nurtured and led up to strength and steadfastness. So much remains to be done, after the convert has entered the church and come under the care of a pastor. And you will observe, my brethren, that all this remaining work is to be done, in one and but one way. Since the Holy Spirit never adds a new faculty to the new man, the child of grace, like the babe of nature is complete, so far as organic powers are concerned, from the moment of birth. Accordingly, whatever the christian gains or reaches after conversion, must come as the fruit of simple culture; must come, that is, through the one process of perfecting present graces. What a work waits the hand of the pastor then, in every believing soul of his charge! And how appropriate the term which, to describe that work, calls it perfecting the saints.

Take another view of the case. You have before you a given christian, member of the church and servant of Christ. Take now the several traits, graces, and habits, that make up this religious character, and just picture to yourselves in imagination,



what would happen to those qualities and affections, if religion were to become fully developed in that converted soul. Descend to particulars. There is in that heart a genuine christian faith. You observe however that at present, it is exceedingly weak, is rather the germ of faith, than faith itself. But it is capable of an unlimited expansion and an immense improvement. Expand it then. Make it all that christian culture and christian capacity permit; all that can be expected or experienced this side of heaven. And what enlargement of capacity and power, would come to that single trait!

Take next the man's prayers. You see what they are now; genuine and sincere, but exceedingly deficient in scope and spirit, in devout affection and power with God. Improve these prayers in temper, in frequency, in faith, in tone, and substance, and scope, till the supplicant can accomplish day after day at the throne of grace, all that it is permitted to mortal supplication to achieve. And what an amazing increase and expansion has been wrought, by just perfecting in the saints the one grace of prayer. Take once more for illustration, the example of the christian. We all observe what it is now; luminous at points, but obscured and disfigured on every side by remaining sins, or the scars of sins erased. But improve that example. Improve it just as far as it is possible in this world, to improve the visible character, and increase the personal influence of a christian. And what a removal of the old eclipse of sin, and what an expansion of light, and beauty, and power ensue as the certain and glad result. Who can tell how much of this glorious and goodly work, of perfecting holiness in the fear of God, remains to be accomplished in any single christian mind. Here is the work given in charge to the gospel ministry. Take these converts, says the Saviour, and busy yourself day by day, perfecting their graces.

Thus far we have looked only at the work to be done in a single regenerate mind. Let us enlarge the view for a moment now, and conceive of an entire church of converted men and women. Here are a hundred, here are perhaps six hundred regenerate souls, committed to the care of a single pastor. And in each of these souls, there is such a work to be done, as we have tried to conceive and delineate. Take these babes in religion, these beginners in godliness, and perfect them, says the Saviour. In their interior graces, and their outward example; in their habits of worship, and work, and intercourse, improve them, improve them all, building up religion upon its own foundations, and perfecting the work, which has been so hopefully commenced. My hearers, can any of us fail to see, that there is in every church of Christ on earth, an occasion and a call for this very work which our text tells us has been assigned to the ministry? Had the Saviour omitted to provide for such a work, would not the churches, long before this, have together implored him to consider their necessi-

ties, and give them apostles, and prophets, and evangelists, and pastors, and teachers, for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ? You have seen the obvious need of this work. Consider now in the second place,

## II. ITS VERY GREAT IMPORTANCE.

And to discern this, reflect, in the first instance, on the fact that the work in question is absolutely indispensable. Every christian is called to holiness: to incipient holiness at conversion; to increased and proximate holiness, by subsequent culture in the school of Christ on earth; and to consummate and perfect holiness in the kingdom of God on high. At conversion this great work of sanctification and growing purity commences, and as every such work must commence, in an act of divine power. The believer is then created in Christ Jesus unto good works. At the resurrection, there will occur another supernatural act, and another miraculous change in the christian's character and condition. But between these two points, between the regeneration of the soul, and the resurrection or regeneration of the body, there lies an interval in which there is to be in the case of all who live after their conversion in this lower world, a growth and a progress of genuine piety. And this growth in grace is everywhere set down in the New Testament, not only as a mark of the true religion, but also as an indispensable attainment. But the only way the saint can grow in grace is that described in our text. The believer grows, while, and only while ministers, and ordinances, and duties, and discipline, attended and enlivened by the Holy Spirit, perfect his existing habits and edify his present piety. Here then is a work, that is not only important, it is also indispensable. The christian must be delivered from his sins. These pernicious sores must be healed. If ordinances and instructions are too weak to do the work; if the ministers of grace labor in vain, to perfect his children, sooner than see his purpose fail, God will send his ministers of judgment, and hew off tenacious habits and tough sins, with his sharp axe of affliction. Here then is our first view of the work in question, looking at its importance. It is a work which if not done by the ministry, must be done by severity and discipline. The saints of God are called to holiness, and by one means or another, a faithful Saviour will make them holy. It will assist us to estimate aright the great importance of this work if we consider, secondly,

How much the peace and usefulness of every christian must of necessity depend upon his growth in grace. What is it that like a gangrene in the heart, is continually eating out the vigor and the life and the happiness of the saint, giving leanness to his graces, and alarm to his hopes? We all know. His remaining sins eat like a canker, so long as they are not subdued and eradi-



cated. And what is it that is continually tarnishing the lustre, and defacing the beauty of the christian's example? Everybody answers,—His remaining sins, creeping ever between him and Heaven to eclipse his graces and darken his life. And what relief has the saint? How can he retain the vigor and the joy of his religion? How can he keep the light that shines in his example, that is to say, how can he escape this ever returning cloud of sin? There is but one way; and that is described in my text, where the ministers of Christ are sent to their task, and told to employ themselves continually in perfecting the saints. Whatever the peace and usefulness of a hundred or many hundred regenerate souls are worth to them, and to the world, then, that and more is the value of this work of perfecting the saints. I say that and more. For consider, thirdly,

That since by a law in the kingdom of God, the convert's capacities for receiving and enjoying the Holy Spirit on the one hand, and for communicating his influences on the other, increase in the exact proportion of his religious growth,—all the higher measures of grace, and all the riper and richer forms of experience are reserved, to be conferred, if at all, after the convert has advanced to superior stages of attainment, and reached a higher stature in grace. The lowest measure of the Holy Spirit—if such a phrase may be used for mere illustration—the smallest measure of renovating grace ever given to one of God's people, is given at conversion. Just as in the distributions of his Providence, God sends to the buds and the grasses of spring, the faintest beams of the sun, reserving the hot noons and harvest weeks, for their riper hours—and gives to babes, the tiniest thoughts and the feeblest strength, keeping manlier ideas, and greater vigor, for manly years; so in dividing to his people the grace of the Holy Spirit, he gives the convert what the convert needs, but withholds the higher and the richer measures, for riper wants and later uses. How then shall the members of a church attain to these higher measures of grace and power? What shall a pastor do to lead his regenerate flock up to these waiting treasures? Suppose he never tries to do this. Suppose he and his people are content with mere conversion. If they can gather annually, or once in ten years, a harvest of regenerated souls, and add them to the church, they are satisfied. Religion prospers. The gospel is doing its work, they say. But is it so? Does a church that receives only these first measures of grace; a church whose ripest and best members are ever its most recent converts; a church in which nothing is done or done effectually, to attain and enjoy and illustrate the higher forms of experience and the larger measures of grace; a church which habitually loses all but the mere beginnings of piety; does such a church prosper? Would a village ever prosper in which the babes remained babes to the last? Would a farm prosper if the blades of corn and wheat

which shot up in spring, remained stationary and the same, till autumn frosts fell on them? This is not prosperity, my hearers. Let us be grateful to God for his converting grace. Let us welcome with hearty thanksgiving, every regenerate soul that asks admission to our churches. But let us at the same time remember, that unless these converts, and the older saints with whom they associate, ascend together on this path of perfection described in the text, they and the church in which they sleep and shrivel, lose God's richest grace and come short of his best gifts. Let the pastor especially, understand and remember, that only by doing his appointed work, perfecting those whom God has converted and put under his care, can he lead his people to those wells of salvation and rivers of grace, for which conversion is no substitute, is only the preparation and the promise. What an accession of grace and power would come to our churches could we but get these reserved treasures, and these later donations of the Holy Spirit! Though not a soul were converted, and not another member added, if those who are now within the fold could be put in possession of the grace, which God stands so ready to bestow, what a baptism would that be to all these thirsty hearts. One well developed man is worth more than many babes. In a house, in an army, in a village, men are mighty, babes weak. When will pastors and churches so understand the mind of God, that they shall together seek, through the one method of perfecting the saints, to fill these nurseries with men, men in faith, men in stature, men in power! But there is even a higher view than this, revealing the importance of the work assigned to the Christian Ministry. It is, fourthly—

The fact that the honor of Christ and the credit of his religion, depend in this world, on the development which that religion attains and manifests, in the visible character of its converts.

Christianity, it should be remembered, has but one residence in our world. Religion lives not in our creeds, or sermons, or scriptures. These are glasses, in which the daughter of God sees her own likeness. Religion lives in the hearts, and reveals herself in the lives of God's regenerate people. And as that is the only real christianity which men can find, they judge of Christ and his religion by this only specimen, looking ever at the example of the church. Now religion may exist in either of three conditions: in germ and embryo, as in the convert; in caricature and disgrace, as in the backslider; or in complete development and full splendor, as in the ripened and symmetric saint. What then if in our churches we have converts and backsliders, but no ripened souls, no finished saints. What if evangelists and pastors and teachers become content with labors and success that only restore the lapsed to the standing of converts, and increase the ranks with added recruits. What if we shall even get to that, that we ask and expect of our revivals, only that they shall

give us a christianity such as appears in the convert; and are content to show to the world, this as our highest specimen and best form of religion. My brethren, is it not time we were pondering the question with profound seriousness and much prayer, whether we are not dishonoring Christ and doing violence to religion, by consenting to exhibit it ever in embryo as in the convert, or in caricature as in the backslider? We owe it to the world, we owe it to our dear ascended Lord, to lift up to the gaze of men, in this skeptical and unbelieving age, and especially in this new world, where busy millions are laying the foundations of many generations, an example of christianity in its full proportion and proper glory. To do this, we must have in our churches, not converts who can not grow, nor backsliders who grow only in sin, but saints shining as lights, and perfected in grace. Who can tell how much religion needs in our time and in our country, how much it needs in every one of our congregations, the credit and the authority which comes only from a successful endeavor to perfect the saints. And how impatiently does Christ our Master wait, till we have regard enough for his honor, to lay aside our worldliness, and put on our righteousness, and hold forth to men an example of his religion as it is, when after the blade and the ear, there comes the full corn in the ear. This will be done so soon as the work of the ministry is understood and accomplished, as a work of perfecting the saints and edifying the body of Christ.

Having shown you the work of the ministry, what it is, and how important it is, I conclude the discourse, by remarking,

1. *That this is a work requiring, in all cases, the co-operation of three consenting parties.*

The minister of Christ can do nothing by himself. Mere preaching, however faithful or frequent or impressive, will never perfect a saint. The minister must preach; the saint must practice; and the Holy Spirit must sanctify both the preaching and the practice, else the endeavor is vain. Let either party fail, let the minister be negligent in the matter, manner, or degree of his preaching; or the saint be negligent in hearing, or heeding, or obeying; or let the Holy Spirit abandon the case and there will be no improvement and no growth. The perfection of the saints is in all cases a work requiring the concurrent agency of three consenting parties. I remark,

2. *There ought then, to be a distinct and perpetual understanding between the pastor and the members of his church, in regard to the work which he is commissioned and expected to do among them.*

Every member of the church ought to understand that the pastor is sent to him for the special purpose of improving and perfecting his religious character; that in all his studies, selections and sermons, he is, if he deserves the name of a minister of

Christ, earnestly engaged in this one endeavor; and that discouragement and distress are sure to ensue, if he fails in this, his chief work. On the other hand, a pastor ought to be made to understand that every one of the members of his church expects him to labor expressly and earnestly for this end. He ought to have, animating and directing him in all his preparations, the living assurance that his people, particularly his religious people, desire to be improved, desire to grow in grace, desire to get on to higher states and riper attainments in godliness; and that unless he assists them, by instruction and admonition and constant endeavor, he disappoints and displeases them. Such ought to be the understanding between a pastor and all the members of his church.

And then, with this mutual understanding as to the real object and proper work of the ministry, each party ought,

3. *To be specially vigilant and careful to perform its prescribed and indispensable task.*

The pastor ought, in all his preparation, to keep in mind what he is sent of Christ to do. Every address, every prayer, every sermon, ought to be selected and framed with special reference to the improvement of his christian flock. Not omitting to preach the whole truth, nor forgetting that he is sent to offer the gospel to all men, he should at the same time make the edification of the body of Christ, his great aim, his pre-eminent work. No other object ought to be allowed to come in and divert him from this one business. No fierce gales of popular excitement; no lordly pressure of great events; no regard to public opinion; no desire of popular applause; nothing should for a day seduce his thoughts from his one appointed work. His business is the perfecting of the saints of God. Let him do it, and do it faithfully. On the other hand, the saint who is to be perfected, ought to be equally vigilant and equally faithful in his specific work. The pastor is to perfect his people in his appointed way, by preaching. The hearer is to contribute his part in his appointed way, by doing. Hence the admonition, Be ye doers of the word and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. The whole experiment fails if it fails here. If the christian neglects or defers to do, if he merely hears and omits to obey, all is disappointment, all failure. It is the imperative duty of every member of the church to carry out the divine plan and obey the word, that so the ministry may do its work, perfecting the saints.

Brethren of this Church, and you their pastor elect and willing, I give you hearty joy and much congratulation, on the auspices of this happy hour. Especially do I rejoice and give thanks, with you, flock of God, knowing as I do, the tried excellence and christian repate of him whom you have chosen to be set over you in the Lord. Long may he live and labor in this inviting vineyard. And may every returning year witness, as I

doubt not it will, the same untiring zeal, and the same assiduous care, and the same prudence, and the same manifest success, which have marked his previous ministry, and given him already the confidence of the wise and the fellowship of the good.

Be it yours, my brethren, to understand from this hour your several responsibilities. Let it be his to seek with diligence and zeal and much simplicity of love, your christian improvement, your growth in grace. And be it yours, be it the desire and purpose and settled habit of every one of you, to do the work which the Gospel enjoins. So shall Christ and his religion have the honor in this community, of an example in which the ripest graces and rarest traits of a consummate and perfected piety, shall shine forth to the gaze of many beholders. So shall the work of the ministry begun to-day, be done and well done among you. Which may God grant through the gift and the working of the Holy Spirit. AMEN.

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## SERMON DCCCVII.

BY REV. J. S. PATTENGILL,

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### HOW SHALL THE MINISTRY BE PROVED?

"Make full proof of thy ministry."—2 TIMOTHY IV. 5.

The Apostle had been suddenly driven from Ephesus, by persecution, before he had completed the organization of the Church; and before he had corrected existing errors from which the Church was likely to suffer. Paul instructs Timothy to complete this work; and for this purpose the First Epistle to Timothy was evidently written. He is directed to discharge the duties of a local missionary in the Apostle's absence—or to act the part of a conservator in matters of doctrine and practice as specified in the Epistle.

The second Epistle seems to have a double object in view; to give Timothy charge as a minister of Christ, in his relation to the Church at Ephesus, and to request his presence at Rome as soon as possible. As if he might not be spared until Timothy should reach him at Rome he writes his last Epistle as a dying man. And, as if he might be spared, he urges Timothy to come to him

with all diligence. Under such circumstances the message has an important significance.

It is the parting counsel of the most eminent of the Apostles. As a father, he addresses Timothy as his dearly beloved son—enjoins him to hold fast the form of sound words—to endure hardness as a good soldier—to avoid entanglement with the affairs of this life—to correct errors of doctrine and practice already apparent, and to show himself approved unto God by diligent study, so as to divide rightly the word of God to all.

He warns him that perilous times were approaching—that fables and forms of godliness would arise to supplant the Gospel—that false teachers would be sought, to gratify the itching ears of deluded disciples; and urges him to follow his own example of fidelity in all things through persecution and trial, to the final triumphs of the Cross. With a heroism which no battle-field ever exhibited, and with a triumph which no conqueror of kingdoms or empires ever experienced, he utters, as with dying breath, this unparalleled charge, as the crowning work of God's chosen instrument of mercy to men.

"I charge thee therefore before *God* and the *Lord Jesus Christ*, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom—preach the word! be instant in season, out of season. Reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long suffering and doctrine. Watch thou in all things; do the work of an evangelist; *make full proof of thy ministry*. For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day, and not to me only but unto all those also that love his appearing."

I leave the battle-field, and lay aside my armor for the crown of victory. I leave the field of conflict to you, and to other soldiers of the Cross. To all them that love the appearing of Jesus Christ, the charge of the Apostle is addressed. When Timothy had fought and conquered—when he had finished his course, and received his crown, other soldiers were summoned to the same field of strife, and of triumphs. The charge—"Make full proof of thy ministry," is yet the trumpet call to battle with similar enemies, in view of similar conquests and crowns. This call is not only to the watchmen, and leader of God's elect, but to all who fill the ranks of that great army which no man can number. They are to stand upon Mount Zion with palms of victory in *their* hands. The same great battle is to be fought upon this ground; not perhaps amidst violent persecutions, but amidst perils, in view of which, the text is a pertinent charge, and the promise connected, a much needed encouragement.

In these circumstances, HOW SHALL THE MINISTRY BE PROVED?



I. In the discussion of this question we may first examine the *evidence connected with the ministry.*

The general duties of the ministry are well understood, so far as they lie upon the surface, and are open to the public eye. The efforts of the pulpit—the daily intercourse of life, the duties connected with the social meeting, and such as are required in the midst of affliction and bereavement, are those parts of a minister's work, which appear upon the surface, and upon which the public judgment is made up. But the more important duties and difficulties of his office, are beneath the surface, and concealed from the public eye. Many of these are of such a nature, that he cannot reveal them, without personal violence to his own feelings—or public injury to the cause of Christ. Some of these we may state in this connection, without doing violence to either.

How the minister shall discharge the duties which he owes to his household, and not entangle himself with the affairs of this life, is a question not always easy to settle. The claims of the pulpit and the study, and the social demands of the people are not always in agreement. The weak must be strengthened—the sick must be visited—the tempted must be counseled, the desponding encouraged, and the mourner comforted. Jealousies must be healed and public scandal, and conflicting evils must have a medium of conservative influences, to prevent ruinous conflict. But who shall counsel, and comfort, and encourage, and hold up the minister of Christ, when his heart is sad, and desponding, and darkness beclouds his path? The hopeless living must be warned, and won to Christ, or perish—the hopeless dead must receive a Christian burial after a life of active resistance to the Gospel—and of unceasing opposition to the ministry. Account must be rendered at the bar of God for the trusts of the Gospel, and the souls of men—in view of that solemn position which the minister must ever occupy, between the living and the dead. Any other man may provide for the future wants of his family, without sacrificing his Christian character, or Christian influence. But the minister cannot do this. Any other man may seek relaxation from crushing anxiety, and exhausting toil, but the *poor* minister has no resting place but the grave. His bow must ever be bent, his lamp must ever be burning. Any other man may receive commiseration for his frailties; but the minister's faults are allowed no public pardon. Any other man may have a home for himself and family, where the purposes and social affections of life may root downward, and grow upward, until ripened friendships are gathered in a good old age; but the minister is a pilgrim, and a stranger, having no certain abiding place. He has no home which frailty may not destroy—which caprice may not blast, and of which, neglect may not rob him. Other men in other professions, and employments, may add comforts and conveniences to make home attractive for their *own* enjoyment as *their own*;

but the minister's relief is, that discomforts are of short duration in any one locality, and are soon resigned to other, and successive wanderers. The death of other men, or the removal of other men may cause his removal, because the contingencies of his life are in the hands of other men, and beyond his own control. Other men may appropriate the avails of active life, to supply old age with competence, and quiet release from temporal want; but the avails of a minister's active life must be devoted to the Church, and to the world for Christ's sake; and when his vigor fails, and the unpardonable sin of gray hairs silvers his head—then as a worthless, worn out servant he must shift for himself, to live if he can, or die neglected.

Amidst all these conflicting powers, he must prove his ministry, to fulfil a divine requirement laid upon him. To do this, it will be clearly seen, that fortitude, and faith must enter largely into the evidence, which proves his work. There must be a fortitude which falters not—a faith which penetrates the veil, to rest in the things unseen and eternal. To the Church, and the world, he must look for no adequate recompense. For this God has made promises in the future; and though he now receives more than he deserves—and more than he in justice is entitled to receive—yet not to the amount promised for service in the vineyard. This is a wise arrangement of the Master. No earthly wisdom can appreciate it—no earthly policy can apply it. It is to be spiritually discerned and spiritually applied by faith—faith which looks to the Church as a means and to God as its end. God has made us ambassadors for Christ—plenipotentiaries of his government, to negotiate a peace with rebel man, upon the conditions of the plan of redemption. As Christ's ambassadors, the outfit, and compensation, must come from the government which sends them forth. What pertains to the wants of the body, is of minor importance; and these wants the Church is directed to provide, because the laborer is worthy of his hire. But for the more important necessities of the ministry, God has made special provision in promises, where faith can rest in secure hope of future reward. These promises lift the spiritual man above the depressing contingencies of this world.

Whoever cannot forsake all that he hath, should not attempt to preach the gospel; for when tried by the afflictions consequent upon this high calling, he will be found wanting, in the most essential qualifications. There is no station which man can occupy in this life, around which so many trials cluster. These are often of the most aggravating character. The minister must share his part of the common ills of life to which other men are subject; and besides these, he must bear the ills which afflict the Church of God, in a relation to them, which no other man can sustain. Is there apostasy, or backsliding, or clashing faction, or betrayal of Christ? the envenomed malice of this depraved

world visits these defections upon the watchman, with peculiar pleasure. If the flock stray from the fold the shepherd must bear the blame. If spiritual death prevails, and the cause of Christ languishes, the minister is held responsible. It is his fault that the people are not aroused, and the work of God revived. Does the Holy Spirit apply the word, and awaken inquiry, and solicitude, and gather sinners into the Kingdom of Christ? Lying rumor and dark insinuation go forth to blast the reputation, and destroy the influence of the ministry. Satan transforms himself into an angel of light, and in the garb of a professed disciple, not unfrequently steals in upon the religious confidence. He would fill the pulsations of the religious heart, so as to give the more fatal stab. These trials must be experienced in order to be appreciated, or understood.

But if the trials of the ministry be many, and severe, the joys and rewards are in proportion. There is no work on earth, so much united with heaven, and none so much connected with all that is redeeming here below, as the work of winning souls to Christ. The commission for this work bears the seal of our ascended Lord, and the promise of his presence and grace. Successful results contemplate battles fought, and triumphs won. They contemplate kingdoms, and crowns, and golden harps, filling every power, and capacity, with the fruition of heaven. In view of such a consummation, present trials are but light afflictions, designed to assist in working out the far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. Here are the reasons why the apostle could glory in infirmities—in distresses—in necessities—because of the large overbalance of rewards.

But faith must have its corresponding works, to make full proof of the ministry. The study and the pulpit must bear witness that faith and works are earnestly united, to make the man of God perfect, and thoroughly furnished. The charge of Paul to Timothy, loses none of its fitness in theory, or application now, because uttered in primitive times; "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." Self instruction is indispensable, to impart instruction to others. Profitable instruction is the result of mental toil, sanctified by prayer, and adapted to the peculiar wants of men. An accurate knowledge of human nature is indispensable to the success of the Christian Minister. Without this knowledge, the giant intellect may waste its strength in vain, where a much smaller capacity may be employed with telling effect. In no pursuit, in life, and in no profession, is a good supply of practical common sense more needed, than in the profession of the Ministry. It deals more than all other professions with the depraved, and deceitful heart. There should be skill in discerning the secret workings of the heart, from its outward manifestations. To secure this qualification, there must be

intimate self acquaintance. For as in water face answereth to face, so doth the heart of man to man.

The pastor needs to become acquainted with the financial character, habits, and standing of his people. In a man's financial habits, as seen in his dealings with his fellow-men—his heart—the *whole man* is more fully revealed than in all things else. The man appears in his dealings without disguise, and through this one source of knowledge, the christian's value is measured, and registered. If he is penurious and overreaching in his worldly pursuits, if he is small and unmanly in his dealings with his fellow-men, they will judge him as a christian by what he is as a man. Largeness of heart and smallness in dealings are extremes seldom found in the same character. Smallness in dealing may be connected with strict honesty—but not with large usefulness. The miser may have a form of godliness, but he cannot have a godly reputation. The spirit of benevolence and the spirit of selfishness cannot dwell together in the same heart. A pure pharisaism may be scrupulous in tithing the smallest matters—but wholly unscrupulous in passing over judgment and the love of God. A pure pharisaism may pray long and fervently and flourish a trumpet in alms-giving; and yet devour widows' houses to answer the grasping selfishness of the heart. What multitudes barter their christian character and usefulness for paltry considerations. "The love of money is the root of all evil." This is more than a proverb. It is the declared existence of a moral disease whose nature and extent must be understood. These necessities must be traced out in the financial habits of every day life. It is needful to know the *man*, to understand the value of the christian. It is needful to know the easily besetting sins of the community, and of its individual members, in order to apply divinely adapted remedies. The success of the ministry depends upon a discriminative adaptation of the gospel to the peculiar necessities of men. Every grade of character and intellect must be reached. The thoughts and intents of the heart must be discerned and laid open. Becoming all things to all men may by all means save some. But an accepted gospel will not bring every sinner to Christ. While to some it may be the savor of life unto life, to others it will be the savor of death unto death. But if the watchman gives timely and faithful warning, the blood of the dying soul will rest upon his own head. Another item of testimony, is a question of time. The unfolding of the whole gospel, is not the work of a month, or a year. It is parallel with the christian's full growth, and is the work of a life time. The *full proof* of the ministry contemplates the relations of a settled pastor—a life labor in a given field.

The thorough and systematic study of the year, is but a work begun. This must be pursued, and perfected in successive years. Permanence, while it allows the fruits of mental toil to ripen in a

rich experience, compels the necessity of meeting difficulties, instead of fleeing from them. The hireling fleeth because he is an hireling, and careth not for the flock. But the good shepherd giveth *his life* for the sheep. A changing ministry is tempted to be irresponsible; to flee from danger, and difficulty, when courage and council are most needed. The shepherd should be at his post if ever, when the wolf enters the fold. This feeling of irresponsibility is everywhere working untold mischief, both to the ministry, and the church. Every change is liable to produce factions in the Church, and from these come instability, and consequent weakness. Every change of the ministry produces a restlessness, if not a recklessness—causing the minister to regard himself as a homeless wanderer on the earth. No industrial pursuit will bear to be thus tantalized, and broken up by repeated changes. If the maxim is true any where that “a rolling stone gathers no moss,” its moral is most significant to a changing ministry. Both minister and people are subjected to a wasting friction, and both are mutually worn out to no good purpose. For such mutual injuries, there is no adequate compensation. The one can form no habits of thorough and systematic study,—and can lay no extended plans of usefulness. The other is tempted to cultivate itching ears for novel gratifications, much more than the christian graces. They will be liable to acquire a morbid religious appetite for anything but sound doctrine. These results, everywhere so apparent, indicate the necessity of time to make full proof of the ministry. Plans of usefulness must extend over a series of years, to provide for the necessities of childhood unto maturity—to cultivate the seed sown until ripened, and gathered into the garner of God.

To prove the ministry fully in the relations of a pastor, more than one witness is required. It avails but little for the minister to say as did Ruth to Naomi—“thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God; where thou lodgest I will lodge, and where thou diest I will die, and there will I be buried! God do so to me, and more also, if aught but death, part me and thee.” Such a resolution must be confirmed by the Church in whose hands are its conditions. Compelled by any effective caprice to change often his field of labor, the minister may make full proof of his capacity to endure hardness, in the hardest allotment of the Christian soldier, but he cannot make full proof of his ministry as a settled pastor. The co-operation of his people is an indispensable part of the testimony, to make full proof of his ministry with them. The duties of the Church to a settled pastor, it is of vital importance to understand, and to discharge.

II. This will introduce us to the second part of our subject viz : *The evidence required of the Church, to prove the ministry.*

The arrangement which God ordained in the law of Moses, for the religious instruction of the Jews, is worthy of careful study.

It is a model of divine wisdom, and directly pertinent to our subject, as important testimony. In the possession of the land of promise, the tribe of Levi was to have no inheritance with his brethren. The Lord was his inheritance. To this tribe was committed the religious instruction of the other twelve tribes. To this tribe pertained the duties of the priesthood—the tabernacle, and the service of the altar of sacrifice. For the sustenance of the Levites the twelve tribes were made responsible by tithes and offerings. The proportion of tribes stood as one to twelve, and the number of the people, about as one to sixteen. This divine apportionment was made with a full knowledge of man's capacities, and man's necessities. As the twelve tribes prospered, the increased tithes and offerings would give to the tribe of Levi his share in the prosperity, and as the twelve suffered adversity, the decreased tithe would make the Levite an equal sharer in the reverses.

The pastor of a specific Church sustains the relation of the Levite—whose inheritance, under God, is the people over whom he is placed. Let the Church make common cause with the pastor as in the divine arrangement made with the Jews, and there is scarcely no Church so feeble, as not to be able to support the gospel. Should common cause be made as God required of the Jews, there is no question of the more bountiful bestowment of temporal and spiritual blessings, as a divine reward. Why should the members of the Church lay up a given amount of property, more or less, every year, and the pastor who devotes his time to spiritual things lay up nothing, and have no claim upon the property of his people? By what rule of right may a Church increase in wealth, and the servant of the Church have no claim upon that wealth? Why may a private christian lay aside property to make old age comfortable, and still put it out of the power of his minister to do any such thing? If the Church is weakened in numbers, and in wealth, why should not the pastor bear his share in the reverses of providence? It is certain that a minister cannot devote his whole time to the spiritual welfare of his people, and at the same time be burdened with the temporal demands of his family. As his mission to the Church is of a spiritual character, he sustains in this work the position of a servant. But he cannot serve God and mammon. If his time and strength are divided between the demands of his household and of the Church, both must suffer. If the church, by neglect, subject him to harrassing solicitude in temporal things, they are the losers in spiritual things.

In the Jewish arrangement to which we have referred, the Levite was released from public service at the age of sixty years. The high priest held his office during life, assisted in old age by his colleagues in the sacred office. As his duties were not burdensome, they were continued to the limit of his ability to dis-



charge them. But the priest and Levite received adequate provision, when laid aside by age or infirmity. After a period of thirty years of active service, they were paroled pensioners upon the blessings of God to Israel for the remainder of life. The spirit of this arrangement, was once the rule of the Church in New England.

When a minister has given the best of his days to the service of the Church, for the consideration of food and raiment, it is not reasonable that his old age should be neglected, and unprovided for. If death shall make his wife a widow, and his children orphans, there is no provision made for them. Their wants are forgotten, ere the sod has become green upon the fresh grave of their protector. Forbidden by his duties to the Church to make provision for his family while living; and when he is dead they are soon forgotten, as having ever sustained any relation to the Church, different from the widow and fatherless of any other man. Death cancels all obligations of the Church to the minister's family. Dead men's services, it is not the rule of the Church to recompense. For neglect of the Levite, God often visited his people with severe displeasure. If neglect of these relative duties is any less a sin now, than in ancient times, we have failed to understand the plain teachings of the Bible. There are numberless demands upon a minister's income, because he is a minister, of which the Church have little or no knowledge—demands by the Church, and for the Church, which no private member in called to meet. Besides, it is hardly fair to compel the purchase upon credit of every article consumed, at barter prices, and then charge the exorbitant expense to a lack of economy. It does require good economy to live upon a small salary paid in promises, or to lay up money from unpaid obligations. We believe it to be the duty of the Church to adopt the pastor and his family as their own children, and to make common cause with them for their sustenance. It is the right and duty of the pastor, to adopt the Church as his inheritance. As he labors in spiritual things, it is needful that he should be wholly given to his work. For his temporal wants, it is the duty of the Church to provide—not only while in active service, but also for the wants of inactive age. When the pastor can rely upon such a provision, one of his heaviest burdens is removed. The dark hours of solicitude which now cause despondency and foreboding want, would be illumined with light. Then the oft repeated inquiry—what will become of my family? is answered. For Christ's sake they belong to the Church, and when his work is finished, he can die in peace. Now he is determined to know nothing but Christ, and him crucified, because now he *can* serve his generation by the will of God.

The usefulness of the ministry depends very much upon the co-operation of the people. The lack of service on their part, compels a lack of service on the part of the ministry. When a

minister's investments for future need, consist in confident reliance upon the justice, and generosity of his people, then may his whole energies be under command, to make full proof of his ministry. It will be seen by these considerations, that a permanent, and useful ministry, is a matter committed very much to the will and co-operation of the Church. The pastor's duties to his people will be discharged, as they fulfill their duties to him.

But it often occurs, that a minister's popularity is greatest at the beginning of his labors, and continues to wane, until the people are clamorous for his removal. In such cases fault is generally mutual. The pastor is chosen, and settled upon short acquaintance, and with very little prayerful consideration. The people may have looked for prosperity and success, without co-operation, and become cold and selfish over the disappointment. They had placed their confidence in an arm of flesh, and not in the Lord, from whom alone cometh the increase. Disaffection, when once engendered, is not apt to lessen. The relation entered upon was but an experiment, instead of a solemn reality, by which they were to live, and in which they were to die. They were married with the consideration, that the covenant might at any time be broken, and hardness of heart procure a divorce.

There is one difficulty ever connected with the pastoral relation, for which no adequate remedy has yet been found. The minister is a man subject to like passions as other men. This is unfortunate; but there is no disguising the fact. He is compassed about with infirmity. He does not understand all mystery, nor all knowledge. He has not the tongue of an angel. He cannot remove mountains. His faults are very conspicuous, by virtue of his position. He is liable to feel sad under afflictions, and to be desponding under discouragements. From the influence of unexpected trials, his self-possession may forsake him. His fortitude is not always proof against ingratitude and reproach. He never becomes entirely insensible, on the one hand to flattery, nor on the other, to scandal and backbiting. Sickness, and old age, seem to affect him very much as they do other men. If he were perfect, he might be able to give satisfaction to all, who assume to be conservators over his conduct. If he could fill the ideal of every required standard—if he could live upon angels' food, so as to perform more labor at less expense—if he could preach by inspiration without study, and satisfy both the bad and the good, without giving offence to either—if he were not liable to sin, or grow old and infirm—or to sicken, and die like other men; and in fine, if he were not a worm of the dust; a sinner to be saved by grace, and one who must through great tribulation enter into the kingdom of God, then might the Church possess in him an ascension gift, of every desired qualification. Then, if such a pastor could find a perfect people, free from all jealousy, and evil speaking, and selfishness, and fault-finding—a people after his

own heart, then might he be content to dwell with them. But, as pastor and people are only redeemed sinners, and are in constant need of restraining grace, each is called to put on charity above all things and mutually bear each other's burdens. Thus may they dwell together in unity.

Another requisite of the people, to prove the ministry, is a capacity to hear the gospel preached unto them. The gift of hearing, is more essential than the gift of speaking, to make the word preached effectual. To hear with earnest attention; to hear with a mind free from prejudice, and open to conviction; to hear as hungering and thirsting for spiritual nourishment; to hear as listening to the *words of God*, and as bound to the judgment seat,—are qualifications of very rare occurrence. A gifted minister can prepare but few superior sermons. The deficiency may be remedied by the gift of hearing. But the gift of hearing as described, is possessed by very few in any one congregation. The larger part of an audience never give earnest attention to a whole sermon. Some seem to have a settled arrangement to sleep during a portion of the time of public worship. Others are listless and indifferent—whose minds like the eyes of the fool, are roving to the ends of the earth—unappreciating, and unblest. It is safe to say, that a minister preaches the gospel to less than one fourth part of his congregation. The rest are forgetful hearers, whose characteristics are described in the parable of the sower.

It so happens, that the pastoral relations are seldom disturbed by the earnest, and prayerful hearers of the gospel. The connection between the closet and the pulpit, is too intimate and full of blessings, to allow of sacrilegious invasion. But such as hear but little or not at all—or hear for criticism, and fault-finding, are usually the source of those evils which defeat the designs of the gospel, and unsettle both the Church and the ministry. The faithful hearer proves the word, by being a doer. But the forgetful hearer treasures up in memory no correct impress of his own character, and in his present state, and future prospects, appears the negative proof of an accepted gospel; a savor of death unto death. A good hearer, is the best possible remedy for a poor speaker. The hearer's fixed and earnest attention is of great service to stimulate, and encourage the preacher. There is a living sympathy between the pew and the pulpit, and between the closet and the study. The one prepares the seed and the other the soil, for its reception. God gives the early and the latter rain, and the bountiful harvest. The indifferent features; the vacant expression of a forgetful hearer—the wandering eye and roving imagination of thoughtless irreverence, are less hopeful objects of address, than the dry bones of the valley of vision. These revived at the voice of the prophet. One earnest hearer is worth any

number of stupid, and forgetful hearers, to encourage the hope of blessing, from the dispensation of the gospel.

We may specify in conclusion the necessity of keeping the heart. Out of it are the issues of life, and out of it proceed evil thoughts; and that world of iniquity has never been tamed of mankind. This world so full of scandal and evil speaking, stops not at the sacred enclosure of the Church. The holiest relations of earth, the depraved heart loves to invade. The most sacred interests of earth, it loves to set on fire and destroy. A little fire is easily enkindled to a mighty flame, which mocks all efforts to control or subdue.

The unfailing promise is made, "whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap." This is your encouragement to labor; to scatter the good seed of the kingdom with an unsparing hand. For he that soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly. The same promise touching the harvest of the seed sown, is one of fearful import to the wicked. The seeds of sin and death existing in the natural proclivities of the soul; nurtured and multiplied by an irreligious life, betoken a harvest united with lamentation and woe; for he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption. Faint not nor grow weary in the vineyard because much of the good seed may fall by the wayside, or upon stony ground, or among thorns, and thereby fail of the desired result. Paul may plant and Apollos water, but God must give the increase. Be not weary in well doing for in due season ye shall reap if ye faint not.

The Saviour may be crucified afresh, to make his toiling servants often sad in this tearful pilgrimage. Perils surround every footstep, to impress the warning—"Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall." With due regard to the instructions of the Great Teacher, your mutual testimony will make full proof of the ministry, not only in sowing the seed but in gathering the harvest. Keep in remembrance the important truth, that the relations this day consummated, must needs be of very short continuance. The trial and proof of the ministry here, will soon be closed up for the adjudication of a higher court. May it then appear, that together you have lived, and loved, and labored, and triumphed, and the final award of "*well done*" seal the verdict of sovereign grace.